Edward S. Bragg School
149 East First Street
Fond Du Lac
Fond Du Lac County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WI-288

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

EDWARD S. BRAGG SCHOOL

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Location: 149 East First Street, Fond du Lac (City), Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin 54935

Present Owner: City of Fond du Lac, 160 S. Macy Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Presently, the building is vacant and awaiting demolition after January 18, 1982. A new Senior Citizens Center is proposed to be constructed on the site.

Significance: Bragg School is a property considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places because of architectural rather than historic significance. There were no known events which would contribute to its eligibility. However, the school is associated with a significant architect. The E.S. Bragg School was designed by the regionally important architectural firm of Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton, based in Chicago. Architecturally significant as an example of a type of architecture, Bragg School couples a well articulated, nicely scaled exterior with an innovative floor plan which exemplifies the design philosophy promulgated by Dwight H. Perkins, one of the leading school architects of the period.

Bragg School was designed in 1914 during a period of increased utilization of the neo-Gothic and neo-Classical styles. Perkins, individually and with the firm, had employed these derivative styles for a number of large educational facilities. However, he also created a number of excellent Prairie School designs and it was this idiom, with overtones of the Arts and Crafts movement, which guided the design of Bragg School.

The language of the Prairie School is well suited to what is a relatively small scale building. Subtle ornamentation and strong masses and roof lines created by wall plans reinforce the scale and tend to unite the building with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Although constrained by cost and size requirements (the school cost $47,710 without equipment, and measured 100 x 126 feet to accommodate approximately 450 students), Bragg School was designed to meet modern educational needs. Perkins considered this a good school design, using it to illustrate his theory on the important function of schools as community centers. Proper handling of interior spaces could, according to Perkins, result

in a building easily adapted for neighborhood use, an important asset in any community. In Bragg School, this dual function is apparent in the central location of the assembly hall/gymnasium and the inclusion of the fireplace, which imparts a 'domestic' quality. In addition, the kindergarten area doubled as a stage is suitable for community as well as school presentations. The skillful manipulation of space creates a public arena notable for the balance achieved between domestic comfort and impressive spaciousness. The interior is designed to encourage maximum use of the building.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection:

Ground was broken for the project on March 1, 1914. The building was occupied on September 21, 1914. All contracts were completed on October 1, 1914 and an opening ceremony was held on October 16, 1914. This information comes from a brochure prepared to commemorate the opening ceremony.

2. Architect:

The architectural firm was Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton from Chicago. Dwight Perkins was the principal in charge of the project. Dwight Perkins (3/26/1867 - 11/2/1941) received his architectural education and was employed as an instructor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was born in Tennessee, but raised in Chicago. He returned to Chicago in 1888 to enter the architectural office of Burnham and Root. Following his departure in 1893, Perkins founded his own office and collaborated both formally and informally with his associates, Frank Lloyd Wright, Robert Spencer and Myron Hunt.

In 1905 the Chicago Board of Education appointed Perkins as its chief architect and in so doing "pioneered in the adoption of a modern American architecture for school buildings" according to Carl Condit (The Chicago School, page 201). After five years at this post, Perkins formed a partnership with William K. Fellows (a designer best known for industrial buildings) and John Hamilton, an engineer. The partnership was dissolved in 1927.

The firm was centered in Chicago and received commissions primarily in the Midwest. However, a wider audience was reached through publication of designs in contemporary journals, particularly the Inland Architect, Western Architect, and The Brickbuilder.

Bragg School is apparently the only school in Fond du Lac designed by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton. The firm designed a school in Osseo, Wisconsin (burned) and a high school in Manitowoc (1922) which has been altered and is not comparable to Bragg School.

3. Original and subsequent owners:

The City of Fond du Lac has owned the property continuously from before construction to the present time. The chain of title is as follows:

1870 Deed June 1, 1870 recorded in Volume 60, Page 182.
John Rossiter and Ann Rossiter to the City of Fond du Lac.

1870 Deed June 18, 1870 recorded in Volume 58, Page 584.
John Rossiter and Ann Rossiter to the City of Fond du Lac.

1870 Deed June 21, 1980 recorded in Volume 58, Page 640.
Samuel Wismann and Sarah Wismann to the City of Fond du Lac.

1891 Deed July 1, 1891 recorded in Volume 138, Page 451.
Mary Vetter and Ferdinand Vetter to the City of Fond du Lac.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:

Immel Construction Company	- General Construction
D. Ahern & Son Company	- Heating
D. Ahern & Son Company	- Plumbing
Piepkorn-Henning	- Electric Wiring
Gimbel Brothers	- Curtain
Johnson Service Company	- Temperature and regulation
H.E. Watt	- Humidifier

5. Original plans and construction:

The original plans cannot be located. However, a photographic copy of the floorplan is enclosed as an additional submission.

6. Alterations and additions:

There have not been any significant alterations or additions to the building since its construction. Discernable alterations are described as part of the architectural information section.

B. Historical Context:

The Edward S. Bragg School was built in 1914. It was named after General E.S. Bragg, a Fond du Lac resident who commanded Wisconsin's "Iron Brigade" during the Civil War. After the war, he served in Congress and, later, in diplomatic service in Cuba, Hong Kong and the territory of New Mexico. Bragg was never personally associated with the school.

In addition, there were no significant educational innovations at the school nor were there any other events which would contribute to its eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places based on historical criteria.

The City of Fond du Lac has owned the property since before the construction of the school. The building was used as a school from 1914 until approximately 1976. The building is now vacant awaiting demolition. Title to the property is expected to remain in the City of Fond du Lac.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character:

Bragg School is a two story brick structure dating from 1914. The north-south axis of the rectangular plan terminates in truncated wings which anchor the symmetrical design. The main (south) entrance facade contains a progression of forms as a one story protruding bay merges with a rectangular block (containing mechanical rooms and entrances) which adjoins the main body of the structure. This layering effect is repeated vertically by the various eave and roof lines of individual building sections, culminating in the parapet walls of the interior two and one-half story hall. Large brick piers rise above a connecting shed roof to define the corners of the building. A similar visual anchoring device is provided at the parapet wall by brick piers which, in fact, are ventilation shafts.

Flanking the bay are two entrance approaches. Originally, the entrances were recessed. However, exterior doors have been added to create vestibules. Piers, with plain stone capitals, support a tapestry brick panel over each entrance.

Side elevations contain two rows of rectangular windows set in segmentally arched openings. Vertically, piers divide openings into two sets of five units with each set accommodating one classroom. Similar groups of windows light the rear projecting block which, like the facade, is flanked by entrance approaches. Interior staircases are identified on the southern extreme of side elevations by large arched windows.

The reddish-brown exterior brick is laid in common bond with every fifth course a header row. Contrasting with the brick are stone foundation, lintels, sills and copings. Expanses of wall surface are vitalized by panels of tapestry brick rather than applied ornament.

2. Condition of fabric:

The common bond brick is contemporary to 1914 construction and it wears its age well. Tuckpointing is required.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions:

Overall the building measures 126 feet from north to south and 100 feet from east to west.

2. Foundations:

The foundation is stone layed in mortar joint for most of the building. Other areas are brick and concrete.

3. Walls:

Brick walls are common bond with every fifth course a header row.

4. Structural system, framing:

Exterior brick construction with interior wood studs covered with lath and plaster. There is a wood roof system and rafters in the lower roof areas. The auditorium area has a metal bow string truss system.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:

There is brick construction on porches and stoops with concrete floors.

6. Chimneys:

The chimneys are of brick construction and serve both the boiler as well as the fireplace.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

Doors are solid core wood veneer with LCN closers set in wood sides and head jamb with stone sill.

b. Windows and shelters:

The system of fenestration is regular and designed to provide natural light throughout the interior. The facade bay contains three rectangular windows (6/6) on the face and two on each bevelled corner. A stone course at lintel height divides these large double hung windows from small three pane windows.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

The complex roof system is apparent on the facade where the modified hipped roof above the bay intersects with a hipped section of the service block roof. A shed roof extends across the main two story mass. Although not visible on the exterior, the central hall is capped by a low gable. Exposed rafter ends, with decorative notching, appear at the various eave lines. The original clay tile roof has been replaced by shingles. The roof is now covered with 235 pound asbestos shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves:

On the gable ends at the eaves as well as the hip jack eaves, notched and decorated rafter ends are exposed.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers:

Brick parapet walls terminate individual building sections. On each corner of the building, set high above the roof, are brick piers. These piers are both visually pleasing and functional in that they serve as ventilation shafts.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Describe by floors:

The plan unfolds around a combination assembly hall-gymnasium rising two and one-half stories to a ceiling sheathed with wood. Lighting of this space was originally provided by a large skylight (since blocked) and rectangular clerestory windows. This clerestory zone is divided into five bays by a series of metal trusses. The bearing walls of the hall-gymnasium form interior classroom walls. Glazed brick, laid in common bond, cover the first story walls. The focal point of this main interior space is a large chimney and fireplace which screens the north offices from the hall-gymnasium. The chimney rises in irregular steps marked horizontally by a brick soldier course. Vertical accents are created by four stack bonds of brick terminating in green tile squares.

Opposite the impressive chimney is the original kindergarten-stage area, occupying the southern

protruding bay. This raised area was originally separated only by a curtain but has subsequently been permanently partitioned. Service areas, restrooms, and staircases flank the kindergarten.

Two classrooms are placed on each side of the assembly hall, with ingress through two doors. The second floor level repeats this pattern. Walkways suspended from the metal trusses connect classrooms along the north-south axis. The only link in an east-west direction is provided by a hall behind the fireplace chimney.

The partitioning of rooms for additional office space has occurred to some extent, most noticeably in the kindergarten area.

b. A sketch of the two floor plans is submitted as a supplement to this narrative.

2. Stairways:

Stairways leading to the mezzanine level as well as one basement stairway consist of wood stringers and wood treads and risers. One of the basement stairways is formed of concrete.

3. Flooring:

The classrooms and office floors consist of 2" x 10" joists, 16" O.C. with diagonal sub floor 1" x 8" boards covered by a hardwood floor as a final finish.

Toilet rooms and vestibules have concrete floors.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

The Assembly hall-gymnasium walls are glazed brick with a wood plank and plaster ceiling. Entry level offices and classrooms have plaster walls with chair rail molding adornment. Ceilings are plaster covered with acoustical tile for sound absorbancy. Mezzanine level classrooms are similar.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

Interior doors are wood style and rail. The lower three panels have wood infill panel with the top panel consisting of single pane glass. Sides and head of jamb are wood construction. Three lite wood transom panels above each door with single pane glass.

b. Windows:

The windows are rectangular shaped 12 lite single pane glass in a wood sash set in a wood frame. None of the windows have storm windows or screens.

6. Decorative features and trim:

Decoration is minimal, dependent primarily on the warm brown tones of glazed brick, chimney decoration and varnished woodwork. The original woodwork has been retained and includes base and cove moldings, stage surrounding, flush ceiling boards and simple stair bannisters.

7. Hardware:

The majority of the original hardware has been removed. Only the exterior door locksets remain. Tulip style Schlage hardware is utilized in these areas.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

The heating system consists of a hot water with radiator system throughout the structure. Heat is provided by a Kewanee boiler installed in 1940.

b. Lighting:

Incandescent and flourescent lighting fixtures are located throughout the building as required.

c. Plumbing:

The plumbing consists of copper supply lines and cast iron drain lines to all fixtures. Fixtures are white porcelain.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:

The building is set in a residential neighborhood. The site is enclosed with a chain link fence. The entire area is blacktopped. A copy of a survey of the site is attached for reference.

2. Historic landscape design:

No evidence remains of original landscaping.

3. Outbuildings:

None

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

None

B. Early Views:

See Photograph No. 17.

C. Interviews:

None

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Analysis submitted by Charles W. Causier in a letter to Neal Herst dated October 21, 1981.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Perkins, Dwight H.
"The School Building as a Social Center"

Part I The Brickbuilder. Vol. 24 No. 12 Dec. 1915. (Rogers and Manson Co. publishers N.Y. and Boston) p. 293-294

Part II The Brickbuilder. Vol. 25 No. 1 Jan. 1916, pp.1-7

Tallmadge, Thomas. "Dwight Heald Perkins"
The Brickbuilder Vol. 25, 1915 p. 146

Inland Architect - Various issues 1906-1907 published illustrations of Perkins designs executed for the Chicago Board of Education.

"Bragg School, Built in 1914 ..."
Fond du Lac Commonwealth Reporter. October 10, 1964
Vol. 39 No. 9 p. 2.

Condit, Carl. The Chicago School of Architecture
Chicago University of Chicago Press. 1964 pp. 200-203

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School
University of Toronto Press, 1972

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

None

F. Supplemental Materials:

Prepared by: Neal R. Herst
Director of Renewal
City of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
January 15, 1982

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

As part of its 1981 Community Development Block Grant application, the City of Fond du Lac proposes to implement what is known as the Senior Center project. The project involves the construction of a new Senior Citizens Center building on the site currently occupied by the Edward S. Bragg School. The Senior Center and Bragg School cannot both occupy the site because of space limitations. Therefore, Bragg School will be demolished. The federal funds for this project are being provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The following participated in the accumulation of information and the preparation of documentation.

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3. Kenneth Johnson, Photographer
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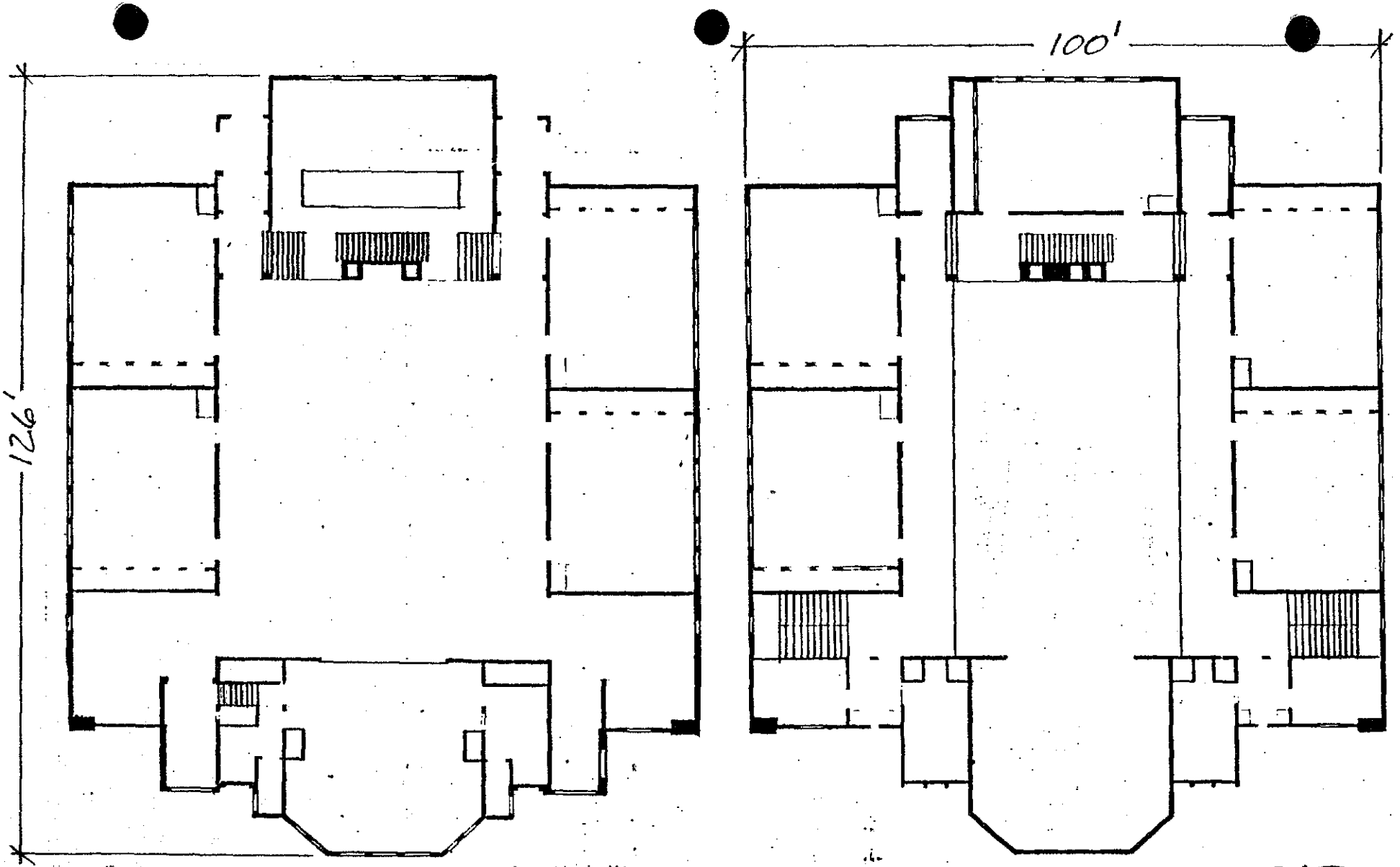

FIRST FLOOR

BRAGG SCHOOL FLOOR PLANS

SECOND FLOOR

DATE: JANUARY 20, 1982